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An Arts Based Exploration of Immigration and Acculturation through the Lenses of First, Second and Third Generation Clinical Art Therapists

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An Arts Based Exploration of Immigration and Acculturation through the Lenses of First,
Second and Third Generation Clinical Art Therapists

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A research paper presented to the

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the impact of acculturation and immigration through the lived experience of first, second, and third generation Hispanic/Latina clinical art therapists. The objectives include the exploration of cultural identity, processing the immigration experience and the role of art therapy. Topics that emerge in the general literature include development of identity, depression, and immigration-related stressors. Although the art therapy literature is limited within the context of immigration and acculturation, information regarding the role of the art, common imagery in groups, and the importance of cultural awareness is available.

An arts-based approach is used in the clinical work to help inform each researcher's acculturation and immigration experience. Through the clinical modality, each researcher processed their immigration story. Themes of sense of identity, family, tension/struggle and choice of materials arise in the findings. The meanings, for each participant vary, encompassing the differences in each of the immigration and acculturation experiences. The results expose the variety of issues encountered when working with immigrant and acculturated Hispanic/Latino/Latina individuals. The findings include the impact of identity, mental health issues and immigration-related stressors.

Key words: acculturation, depression, familismo, Hispanic, identity, immigration, Latino,

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INTRODUCTION

This research investigates the psychological and psychosocial impact of immigration and acculturation experienced by Hispanic/Latino/Latina individuals and their families. We look directly at the impact that immigration and acculturation has on the development of identity, depression, challenging gender roles, and various mental health needs of the Hispanic/Latino/Latina population. Due to a limited amount of research on the impact of immigration and acculturation and its relationship to art therapy, the research team collectively decided to take a qualitative art's based approach. Our method consists of an exploration of the counter transference experience as it relates to our personal immigration and acculturation process from a first, second, and third generational point of view. Our approach also encompasses the relationship with our clients who consequently have been impacted by their own stories of immigration and acculturation. For future art therapists this research contributes to the literature that is needed to understand how art therapy plays a vital role in understanding the Hispanic/Latino/Latina community.

Our personal investment in this endeavor is rooted in each of our lived experiences as first, second, and third generational Hispanic/Latina woman. As a group of woman we have each experienced the weight and impact of immigration and acculturation whether it be personally or through our own families. We have witnessed first hand the difficulties and challenges of adapting to new cultural norms, identities, battling through depression, and additional mental health stressors. With care and sensitivity each one of us has taken an interest in exploring not only the impact on ourselves as individuals but also on the families and generations to come.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY TOPIC

This research investigates the impact that the acculturation and immigration experience has on the various identity platforms, depressive symptomology as well as other mental health challenges that arise within the Hispanic/Latino/Latina population. The identity issues discussed are self-identity as well as ethnic and cultural identity, which concurrently are influenced by the acculturating experience. A common theme throughout the literature also reveals a strong correlation of depressive symptoms within the acculturation and immigration experience, particularly among Hispanic women and adolescents. Other mental health challenges discussed in relation to the acculturation and immigration phenomenon are domestic violence, post-traumatic syndrome, criminality and substance abuse. The concept of *familismo*, defined as strong ties and perceived family expectations of its members (Marrs & Hysjulien, 2013), is introduced to understand the perceptions encompassing the acculturation and immigration experience. This paper also explores the various definitions of acculturation. Berry et al., (1992) define acculturation as the adjustment that individuals encounter due to their interactions with other cultures. Oppedal, Røsbak & Heyerdahl, (2005) define acculturation as changes that are generally expressed as the psychological development of individuals of a cultural minority who are continually undergoing direct contact with agents of a cultural majority.

The art therapy literature provides very little information regarding the topic of acculturation and immigration in the Hispanic/Latino/Latina population. Although minimal research exists, Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trochez and Zuniga (2014) share their results of using art therapy to assist Latina women in identifying and sharing their immigration story as well as their struggles with depression.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review explores both the general and art therapy literature that discusses issues of immigration and acculturation specific to the Hispanic/Latino/Latina population. It is divided into several sections, beginning with general definitions, moving into discussions of identity issues, depression and other mental health struggles experienced as a result of acculturation challenges. Identity issues are specifically reviewed because the process of acculturation is an identity-changing phenomenon. Issues of depression are included in this review because there appears to be a strong correlation between affective disorders and acculturation. Other mental health concerns including domestic violence, criminality, and substance abuse are included in this review because they tend to be common challenges faced by individuals who are experiencing immigration and acculturation.

Demographics and Definitions of Immigration and Acculturation

According to the United States Census Bureau Hispanics/Latinos make up 38.4% in California and 17% across the United States as of 2013, making them the second largest racial group of the nation (2014). Of that racial group, Cervantes and Cordova (2011) note the presence of the fast growing Hispanic/Latino/Latina youth population. It is with this dominate presence in population that Schwartz, Zamobanga, and Jarvis (2007) agree that due to the growth of Hispanic/Latino/Latina population it would be important to continue further research on this topic. Cervantes and Cordova (2011) express a lack of knowledge and concern and consider the lack of understanding as a missed opportunity being able to identify signs of potential mental health concerns. Other factors to consider as noted by Lueck and Wilson (2011) would be the

effects and stressors of how demographics, social factors and individual development impact the acculturation process.

As this paper begins to explore the different issues of acculturation it is important to understand how specific terms have been defined. This section briefly explores a variety of definitions of acculturation and reviews recent literature that presents an overview of the current demographics. Perez (2011) begins by stating acculturation is a multifaceted process in which navigation between two cultures must be explored while Perez & Padilla (2000) describe it as a process that is ever changing and continuous. They further define acculturation as the process that is impacted by behavioral and attitudinal changes from the exposure to the dominant culture. Building on this idea of navigation, Trueba (2002) highlights the importance for Hispanic/Latino/Latina immigrants to obtain a skill, which allows them to be flexible and malleable in balancing various identities, which allow them to co-exist without conflict. Along with this need for balance Schwartz, Zamboanga, and Jarvis (2007) show interest in understanding psychosocial challenges in relationship to acculturation and ethnic identity and how it is impacted by acculturative stress and self-esteem. Cervantes, Padilla, Napper, & Goldbach (2013) define acculturative stress as a process in which immigrants experience a variety of complex stressors that demand and highlight social factors such as language, culture, and interpersonal relationships that contribute to the discrepancy between the host and the culture of the recently immigrated. Lueck & Wilson (2011) continue to describe acculturative stress as the product or result of the psychological challenges of acculturation that highly impact experience and cultural adaptation. Smart & Smart (1995) advocate for the need to bring significant attention and consideration to the importance of acculturative stress due to its longevity and intensity within the Hispanic/Latino/Latina community. Cervantes et al. (2013)

identify a large contributor to acculturative stress is the recently immigrated adolescents role as primary translator for their families when settling in the host country. Cervantes & Cordova (2011) connect the actual experience of immigration with the themes of violence, trauma, and loss that often are associated with the contribution of acculturative stress. In understanding identity, Schwartz, Zamobanga, & Jarvis (2007) define ethnic identity as how an individual perceives and defines themselves within the group. Iturbide, Raffaelli, and Carlo (2009) further define ethnic identity, as being based on their unique beliefs, values, and customs as feelings that are associated with the larger group (2007). Another area explored is cultural identity in which Parra Cardona, Busby & Wampler (2004) posit how an immigrants trans-generational experience contributes to the development of cultural identity. They continue to explain identity as an essential requirement for immigrants as they begin to develop relationships and gain new experiences with the host culture. Although scholars like Trueba (2002), suggest the flexibility and adaptability to be a positive way of developing multiple identities Parra Cardona et al (2004) note that immigrants may take an approach in which they pick and choose which elements to keep, risking emotional cut off if they give up their cultural identity. Trueba (2002) refers to resiliency as the ability in which individuals are able to endure and adapt to the challenges that may be presented to them in life. The terms *acculturation*, *acculturative stress*, *identity*, *resilience*, *are important* as the paper examines the understanding of the development of identity and its psychosocial impact on individuals who have experienced recent immigration and acculturation.

Immigration and Acculturation Identity Issues

This section reviews articles that indicate how important the issue of identity is in the processes of immigration and acculturation and how identity becomes a complicated lived

experience for many recently immigrated individuals. There are three subset identities into which the literature is divided: Self Identity, Ethnic Identity, and Cultural Identity. Additionally this section includes a review of the literature that looks at self-esteem and resiliency as they relate to immigration and acculturation. Parra, Cardona et al (2004) recognize there are a multitude of influences within the home and outside world that impact the success and quality of the acculturative experience. Perez & Padilla (2000) suggest that the key to understanding the formation of the Hispanic/Latino/Latina identity may lie in the stage of adolescence where identity formation begins to take place. They have found that acculturation is a process and a combination of different experiences such as time of immigration, schooling experience, contact with members of the majority group and/or more acculturated members of their same ethnic group that continue to impact the development of their identities. The following section looks into the impact of thus stated identity formation to develop a better understanding of the Hispanic/Latino/Latina immigration and acculturation experience.

Self Identity

Looking into the development of identity formation this section focuses on self-identity and the growing Hispanic/Latino/Latina population in the United States. Perez & Padilla (2000) find it relevant and important to examine the effects of acculturation within the development of self-identity. Trueba (2002) emphasizes the same importance, but in addition calls for a focus on the need to acquire skills to meet expectations of their own culture as well as the dominant culture. Perez and Padilla (2000) examine the connection between the formations of the immigrated adult's identity and highlight the importance of understanding the impact adolescence and their peer groups have on the development of self-identity. For the purpose of

this paper self-identity as defined by the Oxford Dictionary (2015), is the recognition of ones potential and qualities as an individual, especially in relation to social context.

Ethnic Identity

This section looks at the impact of Ethnic Identity on the Hispanic/Latino/Latina experience. As defined by Joseph E. Tremble and Ryan Dickson (2010) ethnic identity is defined as, an affiliated construct where an individual is viewed by themselves and others as belonging to a particular ethnic or cultural group. To better understand the literature, Trueba (2002) looks at ethnic identity as a sense of belonging to a particular group of race, which increases the understanding of being a part of more than one ethnic group. As a result of this understanding of ones ethnic identity, immigrants learn to apply different communicative patterns in each environment. Iturbide et al. (2009) have found when levels of acculturative stress were low ethnic identity provided a protective component to the recently immigrated individual but when the levels appeared to be higher that protective quality was not reflected. Both articles identify key components of ethnic identity

Cultural Identity

This section looks at cultural identity as understood by a developing Hispanic/Latino/Latina culture. Parra Cardona et al (2004) understand Hispanic/Latino/Latina adolescents to have different needs at different stages of their developmental understanding of the cultural identity. Parra Cardona et al (2004) found Hispanic/Latino/Latina adolescents represent a variety of cultural identities and that it is important to understand that students at different stages might have different needs.

Parra Cardona et al (2004) recognize that an understanding of the formation of Hispanic/Latino/Latina immigrants cultural identity is necessary to understand how past

experience by previous generations impact the development of cultural identity, and can leave a space to discuss other members past experiences. It is by understanding the past that Parra Cardona et al (2004) begin to look at the importance of cultural diversity in the lives of Hispanic/Latino/Latina students, and advocate for the integration in a more effective way of cultural experiences into their academic formation. They also consider experiences of connection, differentiation, dynamics of oppression, and resiliency as central components of the trans generational cultural identity model. These experiences are understood to have a major influence in the process of immigration and cultural identity formation. Their work suggests that it is essential to identify where each Hispanic/Latino/Latina is on his or her cultural identity journey and important to assess how Hispanic/Latino/Latina adolescents describe themselves in terms of cultural identity. While the above literature highlights the importance of obtaining and resolving ones cultural identity, it is important to note that scholars like Valentine (2001) have a different view. Valentine examined 110 Hispanic/Latino/Latina in an empirical study that determined cultural identity and the negative impact it has on acculturation. It is important to note that there are opposing views in the research and Valentines is one that frequently comes up in the literature.

Self Esteem and Resiliency

Valentine (2001) discusses self-esteem and generational status as dimensions that positively influence acculturation, whereas Hispanic/Latino/Latina cultural identity negatively affects acculturation. In this context, higher self-esteem increases job satisfaction, and such success may prompt greater acceptance of host cultural ideas. Trueba (2002) discusses how resilience is a function of psychological and cultural flexibility to define oneself in multiple ways and fashions. This author goes on to explore how resiliency and success (defined in terms of

psychological adaption and social mobility) has a powerful influence on mainstream society and enables a creative ability to adapt and participate in different worlds.

The concepts introduced in this section, illustrate how acculturation and assimilation are only a limited view of the immigration experience. This review will continue to explore other dimensions such as Depression that is related to the immigration and acculturation process.

Depression Related to Acculturation and Immigration

This section reviews literature that discusses depression and acculturation. It reviews articles that indicate how prevalent depression is in the processes of immigration and acculturation and how depression complicates life for many recently immigrated and acculturated individuals. The review is subdivided into explorations of the characteristics of depression, comparisons of depression in different cultures, depression in Hispanic/Latino/Latina adolescents, depression in women and the interestingly relevant debate between acculturation and enculturation. A comprehensive review of the literature has found that there is a prevalence of depression among immigrated and acculturated Hispanic/Latino/Latina, which varies by age, gender and experience.

Falcon and Tucker (2000) have suggested that Hispanic/Latino/Latina in the United States may encounter a substantial risk in developing mental health problems. Lopez, Morin and Taylor, (2010), posit that the recent political emphasis on immigration of Hispanic/Latino/Latina into the U.S, has augmented the perceptions and experiences of ethnic discrimination as a serious issue in nearly 61% of Hispanic/Latino/Latina adults in 2010 compared to 50% in 2004, raising a strong correlation between racial and or/ethnic discrimination and mental health conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, and perceived quality of life) (Zeiders, Doane, & Roosa, 2012). According to a study conducted by Gonzalez, Haan and Hinton (2001) the

contingency and pervasiveness of depression was found to be higher for older immigrants compared to U.S. born Mexican Americans. Another study suggested that Hispanic/Latino/Latina adolescents had a higher risk of suffering from depression than non- Hispanic/Latino/Latina White adolescents (Wight, Aneshensel, Botticello, & Sepulveda, 2005). According to Kessler et al. (1994), Data from the National Comorbidity Survey, which used a national probability sample of adults, indicated that, “although mental health profiles were comparable across ethnic groups, the lifetime and 30-day prevalence rates of a major depressive episode were highest among Hispanic/Latino/Latina, in particular Hispanic/ Latina Women, in the 15-44 age group” (Torres & Rollock, 2007 (p.11). In other words, there is also a chance that the differences in the prevalence of depressive incidents or distress vary by age in adults. More specifically, distress or life incidents may very well be linked with depressive symptoms throughout the span of adulthood, what fluctuates is the frequency in which people experience the life incidents and distress associated with depression changes throughout the life span (Nolen-Hoeksema & Ahren, 2002).

Characteristics of Depression

This section discusses a number of articles that have various ideas that expand the controversial definition of depression concerning immigration and acculturation issues.

Vega and Rumbaut (1991) state that depression is depicted as a demonstration of passive methods as a form of response to adaptational challenges; as a result this perception may correspond to a cultural constituent as well as a traditional pathology Depression is recognized as one of the most incapacitating psychological burdens of our current society, with a lifetime incidence rate estimated at 14.6% for countries with high income, 11.1 % for countries with a low to moderate income, and a steady ratio of about 2:1 for women/men (Røseth, Binder & Malt,

2013). They also found that Hispanic/Latino/Latina, particularly individuals of Mexican descent, favored a coping style accentuating adaptive change of one-self or passive tolerance, which may translate as a possible response to the demands from the mainstream culture rather than a trait of their traditional culture. Furthermore, Torres and Rollock (2007) suggest that individuals who become vulnerable to the symptoms of depression may not only be influenced by their ability to plan and resolve problems dynamically to meet goals in their new environment, but in addition requires competence in accommodating and unwearingly adjusting to the new mainstream culture by choosing specific traditional cultural guides. There is an understanding that the acculturation experience becomes more difficult when there is a large cultural distance between the countries that obtain and transfer individuals (Ward, 2001).

Comparing Immigration and Acculturation in Different Cultures

Vega et al. (2008) suggest that researchers have reported a lower prevalence rate of depression amongst immigrating Hispanic/Latino/Latina, compared to U.S. born Hispanic/Latino/Latina and European Americans. In another case, Tillman and Weiss (2009) share their findings suggesting that foreign-born Hispanics, particularly young women, have lower depressive symptoms compared to Hispanic/Latino/Latina born in the U.S. They feel that foreign-born Hispanic/Latino/Latina have a psychological advantage in terms of overcoming stress and social role changes, particularly in their adolescent years.

Depression in Hispanic Adolescents

This section reviews articles that discuss the prevalence of depression among Hispanic/Latino adolescents. The articles in this section also discuss the complications that naturally arise during the adolescents' physical and emotional development that may be further aggravated by the issues of immigration and acculturation.

Zeiders, Roosa, Knight and Gonzales (2013), indicate that an estimated 5–8% of youth are diagnosed with a major depressive disorder. Although this disorder distresses many U.S. adolescents, there is evidence that suggests it is significantly pervasive among Latino youth. Roberts, Roberts and Chen, (1997) suggest that adolescents with Mexican-origins may experience a higher risk of depressive symptoms compared other ethnic and racial minority groups. McLaughlin and Nolen-Hoeksema, (2007) indicate that there is a considerable amount of evidence suggesting that different racial and or ethnic groups carry a higher level of adolescent depression compared to others. Scholars suggest that acculturation enhances the Hispanic youth's risk of depressive symptoms (Vega & Sribney, 2008). Gonzales et al. (2006) concur by suggesting that the acculturation experience has been linked to the development of depressive symptoms among Hispanic youth.

Sullivan et al. (2007) asserts that researchers have discovered a positive association between acculturation and family conflict in Hispanic families and adults, which implies the possibility of a correlation between acculturation and depression. According to Miranda et al. (2000) there is evidence demonstrating a link between acculturation and a decrease in family unity. The adolescent's exposure to the evolving changes occurring in their cultural values may become an added source of controversy and dissonance to the family (Gonzales et al. 2006). Gonzalez et al. (2006) further states that a correlation was found between family conflict and an increase of depressive symptoms in Mexican-origin youth and various samples of Hispanic adults. The reduction in a family's unity may help explain the adolescent's risk of experiencing symptoms of depression due to the acculturation experience (Loukas & Prelow, 2004). Villanueva et al. (2008) posit that parents of Hispanic youth place importance on family values, traditions, close interpersonal family relations, respect for adults and customary gender roles.

Depression in Women

This section reviews articles that discuss the prevalence of depression found in Hispanic/Latina women during the immigration and acculturation experience.

Reynolds (2000) shares that women appear to have a higher susceptibility to depressive episodes compared to men. According to a study of racial/ethnic differences that looked at internalizing and externalizing symptoms in adolescents, Hispanic females experienced higher levels of depression, anxiety, and reputational aggression compared to other racial/ethnic groups (McLaughlin & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2007). O'Connor, Berry, Weiss and Gilbert, (2002) suggest that women carry a higher prevalence of depressive symptoms due to their struggle with negative emotional reactions towards self such as survivor guilt, extreme responsibility and separation guilt. According to Lorenzo-Blanco et al. (2012) Hispanic girls (predominantly Mexican-American girls) experienced a significant correlation between the acculturation process and depressive symptoms as compared to boys. Zeiders, Updegraff, Umaña-Taylor, Wheeler, Perez-Brena and Rodriguez (2013), reveal that a study conducted on the development of depressive symptoms in females of Mexican-origin found an increase in depressive symptoms from age 12-16 years of age, a decrease at the age of 20 and an increase in symptoms until age 22. Tillman and Weiss (2009) suggest that gender may play a significant factor in determining the correlation between nativity and depressive symptoms as evidenced by previous studies that consistently propose that young Hispanic women have a higher susceptibility to developing depression in comparison to young Hispanic men in response to stressful life events. In later studies, Tillman and Weiss (2009) discovered that regardless of the unique circumstances that position immigrants at a high risk in experiencing feeble psychological outcomes, the results suggested

that young immigrated Hispanic women were in fact highly resilient against depressive symptoms compared to young Hispanic women who were born in the U.S.

The Effects of Discrimination on Depression

This section discusses the general literature of the effects of racial/ethnic discrimination against Hispanic/Latino immigrants and its effect on their mental health that may lead to depression.

Zeiders et al. (2012) state that a common challenge for racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S is confronting the issue of discrimination. Fisher, Wallace and Fenton (2000) state that ethnic and racial discrimination is a significant event for Mexican American minorities and could interfere with the individual's mental health condition. The recent political attention given to the Latino population has amplified the sensitivity of these experiences with nearly 61% of Latino adults defining ethnic discrimination as a major problem in 2010 compared to 50% in 2004 (Lopez, Morin, & Taylor, 2010). Berkel, Knight, Zeiders, Tein, Roosa, Gonzalez and Saenz, (2010) all posit that there are studies revealing a strong correlation between a Mexican American adolescent's perception of racial/ethnic discrimination and mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, posttraumatic-stress disorder and the individual's perception of quality of life.

Depression and the debate between Acculturation and Enculturation

This section provides a brief discussion about the effects of depression on individuals who experience either acculturation or enculturation.

Alamilla, Kim and Lam, (2009) propose that enculturation and acculturation are multifaceted concepts, which envelop cultural and psychological experience. Acculturation is defined as groups of different cultures who come in frequent contact with one another and

develop changes to their previous cultural patterns while enculturation represents the process of socialization to one's culture which allows the culture to maintain an identifiable form for years to come. Scholars propose that enculturation protects Hispanic youth from depressive symptoms while acculturation increases their risk (Vega & Sribney, 2008). Acculturation has been associated with the risk for depressive symptoms among Hispanic youth (Gonzalez, Deardoff, Formasso, Barr & Barrera, 2006) but less is known about the associations of enculturation with depressive symptoms. Shwartz et al. (2010) define enculturation as when a Hispanic adolescent gains knowledge and is able to engage in the rituals concerning the values and classifications of their Hispanic culture. Researchers propose that enculturation is protective because it comes with protective cultural values that promote positive, close-knit interpersonal family relationships (e.g., Gonzalez et al. 2006). According to Cabassa (2003), acculturation for a Hispanic adolescent was originally viewed as a development of disconnection from or never obtaining knowledge of their Hispanic culture due to their adaptation to the leading U.S culture. Torres and Rollock (2007) posit that developing competence in a new cultural environment has a significant impact in the development of cultural adaptation and on Hispanic mental health. Alamilla et al. (2010) discuss their findings regarding the proposed protective factors of enculturation in relation to perceived racism in Hispanic adolescents. They reveal that enculturation does not necessarily protect individuals from the psychological stressors produced by perceived racism but rather the enculturated individual views the perceived stress as a threat.

Immigration and Mental Health Issues

This section discusses the general literature of the effects of acculturation resulting in mental health challenges in the Latino immigrant population. The themes found to be most prevalent in the literature include familismo, domestic violence, posttraumatic syndrome,

criminality and substance abuse. These topics, although separated in this literature review, are often not separated from one another in clinical experience and connected in a coexisting environment each complicating the other.

Familismo

This section begins with the concept of *familismo* (Spanish) and *familism* (English translation) because it is often embedded in many of the themes discussed here, linking immigration with acculturation. How Latino immigrants respond to familismo often results in positive or negative consequences.

Marrs, & Hysjulien (2013) define *familismo* as “a multidimensional construct encompassing several dimensions, including support among family members, strong ties between family members, behavioral and attitude perceptions of the family, and family honor and obligation toward the family” (p. 380). Dillion and De la Rosa (2013) further add *familismo* means having a strong attachment to the family unity with high levels of social support. Smith-Morris, Campos, Alvarez & Turner (2012) describe the dimensions of *familismo* as: families being expected to provide material and emotional support, family being consulted for decisions and behaviors and support to solve problems.

Miller and Gibson (2011) describe how *familism* becomes less attached to tradition through proceeding generations and as levels of English increase. Schwartz, Unger, Des Rosiers, Blanco-Lorenzo, Zamboanga, Huang, Baezonde-Garbanati, Villamar, Soto, Pattarroyo, and Szapocznik (2014) describe how retaining their heritage-cultural practices and values may help prevent certain dangerous behaviors in immigrants. Marrs et al., (2013) describe how this attachment with the immediate and extended family has been described in the literature as being both a positive and a negative influence on the effects of acculturation and immigration.

Dillion et al (2013) explain how positive influences of *familismo* include high levels of social support, inspiration, and strength. Further more they describe the ways that positive influences prevent or reduce effects of acculturation. Negative influences include causing stigma, shame and a sense of dishonor. Additionally they describe the negative influences of *familismo* when Latino immigrants seek treatment. Dillion et al (2013) point out how levels of *familismo* prior to immigration may also be a factors in how familismo plays a role with Latinos, i.e. how attached they were to their family before they became an immigrant. Miller & Gibson (2011) argue that experiences of *familismo* change through acculturation, especially through proceeding generations.

Torres and Wallace (2013) state that women are more attached to countries of origin, often with greater *familismo*, and stronger traditional gender roles. Guzman & Brabeck (2009) explain how with acculturation, shifts occur in these roles and there may be a rise in domestic violence. The following section explores the links between acculturation and domestic violence.

Domestic Violence

Sabina, Schally, and Cuevas (2013) state that there is a correlation between the degree of acculturation and the level of domestic violence. Brabeck & Guzman (2013) explain the likelihood of women experiencing domestic violence appears to increase with the presence of poverty, unemployment, and their undocumented immigration status.

Marrs-Fachsel, Murphy and Dufresne (2012) state that with acculturation, gender roles may become renegotiated. They go on to say that each gender adapts to the new roles at different rates, needing new ways to communicate, to engage in employment and to renegotiate gender roles. Galanti (2003) adds to the discussion by saying there are cultural scripts that influence the dynamics between genders: *familism*, *machismo* and *marianismo*. *Machismo* refers to the male

gender being seen as superior strong and dominate male role, while *marianismo* refers to women being culturally submissive, being married in traditional style and keeping the family intact.

Torres and Wallace (2013) further state that women's traditional roles may also become additional stressors in women's mental health:

Women more likely to maintain family care giving roles both in places of settlement and abroad. These additional disadvantages resulting from stressful migration circumstances may lead to poorer health outcomes for female migrants than for male migrants. (p.1620)

Guzman (2009) articulates factors that may complicate acculturation: whether immigrants are documented or undocumented, whether they have *familismo* support systems, language challenges and fear of being deported. One of the biggest fears in reporting among immigrated women is the fear of deportation (Reina et al., 2014)

Brabeck and Guzman (2009) report, "Latinas and Mexican-origin women tend to stay in abusive relationships longer, return to the abuser more frequently, name fewer behaviors as abusive, and be less likely to seek help to leave the abusive relationship" (p.817). Several factors may influence this level of familismo, and gender roles. Marrs et al., (2013), report *familismo* may pose problems with women. The levels of *familismo* has an affect on whether women get abused and also report it (Brabeck, & Guzman, 2009.)

For some women, there is a fear of changing their family's dynamics, feelings of shame and embarrassment, from the family if they report. Brabeck and Guzman (2009) describe, "Machismo", or strong male dominant role in the Latino community, as having an influence on women reporting their abuse. Brabeck & Guzman, (2009) linked higher levels of familismo with seeking more help than women with lower levels. Higgins, & Paranjape (2008) link the levels of

acculturation with the levels of reporting. According to them, the more acculturated a woman is the more likely she will report her abuse. A woman's responses to domestic violence correlate with how levels of social and cultural elements are shaped. These elements include, level of resources available to them, their social status, level of education and a woman's legal status. Reina, Loman, & Maldonado (2014) concur by suggesting that the psychological consequences increase with these results. Women with higher education levels report more than women who were uneducated and/or undocumented (Brabeck & Guzman, 2009.)

Reina et al., (2014) posit that women who were not educated were also unaware of the antiviolence groups and programs available to them. Gratton, Gutmann & Skop (2007) state that the levels of domestic violence escalate in the following generations. Dillion, De La Rosa, Ibanez, & Sastre, (2013) connect higher levels of alcoholism with higher levels of domestic violence within Latino immigrants.

Being in an abusive relationship can result in women developing, disabilities reproductive and sexual problems, as well as depression. Fedovskiy, Higgins & Paranjape, (2008) state these women are more likely to develop mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and PTSD, and are more likely to develop, post-traumatic stress disorder.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

Dilion et al., (2013) describe how the accumulation of stressors of acculturation can lead to trauma, often causing posttraumatic syndrome. Stressors can be attributed to both pre-migration and post migration. Blume, Resor, Villanueva, and Brandy (2009) relate PTSD with traumatic events including domestic violence, major life events, and economic stressors.

Salas, Ayon & Gurrola (2013) emphasize that being exposed to traumatic events, can increase mental health problems such as PTSD. Furthermore, they categorize trauma and

migration in multiple stages; pre migration, second stage, and third stage. Pre migration refers to reasons why people may have migrated from their country of origin such as poverty, social or political reasons.

The second stage refers to any traumatic experience people may have faced while in transit, problems with the *coyotes*, (or smugglers), witnessing or experiencing deaths, dehydration, and rape. Third stage refers to any trauma a person may encounter once arriving in the new country. Trauma may include experiencing discrimination, persecutions, and unemployment. Accumulation of traumas can contribute to negative physical and mental health problems, including posttraumatic syndrome (Salas et al., 2013).

Eisenman, Meredith, Rhodes, Green, Kaltman, Cassells and Tobin (2008) explain how some Latinos may not know they are experiencing posttraumatic stress syndrome. Often these individuals present symptoms of anxiety, and fear. Blume et al., (2009) state that symptoms of posttraumatic stress syndrome appear different in Latinos than in other cultures. These symptoms include experiencing avoidance rather than arousal. The results cause often go under diagnosed or under treated. Furthermore, they do not seek help from family or the mental health services.

Once diagnosed, patients may not seek treatment due to shame, fear and stigma, “No, my problems are very personal. I don’t like to talk to my family or friends about my problems” (Eisenman et al., 2008, p. 1389). Sanchez et al., (2014) state that Latinos don’t seek mental health treatment due to stigma. Zayas, & Torres (2009) further state that Latino men don’t seek help for mental health due to feeling judged. Eisenman et al., (2008) state that some patients believe since trauma may have occurred in the past, clinicians would not be able to help them. Unger, Schwartz, Huh, Soto & Garbanati, (2014) state that not being able to adjust to the

challenges, stressors and discrimination from acculturation may result in an increase maladaptive behavior such as criminality among Latinos.

Criminality

There are no concrete links among scholars linking an increase in crime levels, with the level of acculturation among Latino immigrants. Peguero (2011) connects criminality to levels of assimilation. In contrast, Rivera et al. (2014) link acculturation with crime as being influenced by the location where Latinos reside when immigrating explaining, “Families residing in low-income, inner cities areas may find themselves exposed to heightened levels of social disorganization and higher levels of collective efficacy, factors which may lead to greater exposure to crime and victimization” (p. 316).

Miller & Gibson (2011) further relate location and neighborhoods as being determinants to contributing to higher crime levels. These create exposure to delinquent behavior.

Peguero (2011) state that children are more likely to be influenced by the process of assimilation; the more they are assimilated the more they are potentially engaged in violence. Nieri and Bermudez-Parsai (2014) further state that children are at higher risks for behavioral problems when there are differences in acculturation between parents and children. The more a person is acculturated, the less traditional values are retained (English speaking, and less *familismo*)(Peguero, 2011.) The results of how they cope with stressors, often leads to a rise in alcohol abuse (Miller & Gibson, 2011.)

Alcohol Abuse

There is no general consensus within the general literature that correlates acculturation to high levels of alcohol consumption for Latino immigrants. There are mixed views on how the

levels of acculturation affect the likelihood of immigrants developing substance and alcohol abuse problems.

Not being able to adjust to the challenges, stressors and discrimination from acculturation may result in maladaptive behavior among Latinos. (Unger, Schwartz, Huh, Soto & Garbanati, 2014.) Blume, Resor, Villanueva & Braddy (2009) state that Hispanic adults have a greater risk of high alcohol consumption compared to other populations. Unger, Schwartz, Hun, Soto, and Garabanati, (2014) concur in stating how stressors associated to acculturation (i.e. stress, cultural challenges, higher discrimination) lead to higher alcohol use.

According to Lee, Colby, Rohsenow, Lopez, Hernandez, and Caetano (2013), less acculturated individuals may stress due to language barriers, separation from families, and feeling socially isolated. More acculturated individuals on the other hand may experience stressors related to feeling stigmatized, discrimination in the workforce, and feelings of marginalization. Hamilton, Van Der Maas, Bouk and Mann (2014) correlate SES with predictors of alcoholism, claiming that higher socio-economic individuals have lower rates of alcoholism compared to lower socio-economics immigrants.

Hamilton, et al., (2014) and Szaflarski, Cabbins, & Ying, (2011) state that levels of alcohol change with generations; first generations have lower levels of alcohol than the proceeding generations. Zimore (2007) states that the higher level of acculturation, the higher the levels of alcoholism. Dillion et al. (2013) add that speaking English, and the levels of speaking it, influence alcohol consumption; the more they know, increases the level of alcohol consumption.

Zemore et al. (2009) state that acculturation is an important factor in terms of Latinos seeking treatment. Des et al. (2013) state that the levels of acculturation are barriers in seeking treatment. Less acculturated Latinos may not know how and where to seek treatment while those

with lower levels of acculturation face treatment barriers such as not knowing how to communicate and lacking psycho-education. Zemore, Mulia, Ye, Borges and Greenfield (2009) state that women are less likely to seek treatment for alcohol compared to men. This may be due to the stigma regarding gender roles, being pregnant or being a mother with alcohol problems.

Des Rosiers, Schwartz, Zamboanga, Ham & Huang (2013) argue that a bicultural approach, retaining both the Latino culture and the American, can reduce and at times, be protective against the negative consequences of alcohol. Unger et al., (2014) maintain that strong *familismo* may at times protect Latino adolescents from negative peers that may lead to high alcoholism. Dillion, et al., (2013) discuss how *familismo* is used as a protective barrier against the use alcohol abuse. This may be due to higher levels of social support found in family unity.

Art Therapy Literature

This section reviews the very limited literature found on identity, depression, and mental health concerns in immigrant populations as seen through the art therapy lens. The art therapy literature explores themes found in adolescents, women, and groups of men who are experiencing recent immigration and acculturation. The literature also discusses the importance of cultural awareness between therapists, art as a form of communication, and the common imagery within the artwork.

The role of Art therapy with Immigrant Adolescents

This section explores some of the benefits of using art therapy to help adolescents examine the simultaneous challenges of their individuation and immigration process. Bermudez and ter Maat (2011) share that Hispanic adolescents have expressed the need to explore their immigration and acculturation experience through the art therapy programs offered at their schools. An example was a group of Hispanic middle school students who explored their

feelings of abandonment, isolation, loss and the anger that resulted from their immigration story. Through the art therapy process, the Hispanic immigrant students were able to create artwork that allowed them to grieve the loss of their native land, gain an understanding of self, and the opportunity to develop a support group among one another. Bermudez and ter Maat (2011) posit that adolescent Hispanic clients appear to gravitate towards unconventional forms of art such as community-based art projects and traditional Hispanic crafts.

Exploration of themes of Immigration and Acculturation through Safety

This section investigates the impact of safety and its effect on the use of art as a tool in exploring themes, which often correlate with the topic of Immigration and Acculturation. Understanding the impact of the arts in the development of an adolescent's identity, Perrin (2004) recognizes the construct of art provides an opportunity and outlet for adolescents to express oneself without risk. Trueba (2002) highlights that it is a person's ability to explore and experience different definitions of identities that relates to the individuals survival and success. It is with this understanding that Linesch (1988) recognizes the importance of safety in the environment of art therapy so that the adolescent can explore freely and be encouraged to promote an engagement into a unique and self-expressive opportunity. In working with Hispanic/Latino/Latina adolescents Jang & Choi (2012) and Trueba (2002) recognize that in order to understand adolescents it is important to recognize that they will share more with their peers than anyone else. As noted by Trueba (2002) it is again this flexibility in exploring identities that relates to success and survival.

The effects of Art Therapy on the Symptoms of Depression

As the literature continues to explore themes of identity it is important to note that depression coincides with development of identity. This section examines the therapeutic

components of art therapy with Hispanic/Latino/Latina individuals who have experienced depression as a symptom of their immigration and acculturation experience.

Reynolds (2000) posits that from the psychodynamic lens, the tendency of depression to work inwards is an opportunity for the art to help externalize those feelings. The artwork provides safety and containment for those repressed feelings and allows the individual to explore these emotions in a safe and contained space, which may be difficult for them to express verbally. De Moraes, Dalecio, Vizman, Ribeiro de Carvalho Bueno, Roecker, Salvagioni and Eler, (2014), reveal some of the therapeutic components of the art making process by the use of clay which they state contributes to the physical and psychological health of individuals by allowing them to release subdued emotions such as feelings of depression, helplessness and anxiety. De Moraes et al. (2014) continues by adding that the effects of working with clay, strengthens the self-esteem of individuals who suffer from depression and anxiety.

The effects of Art Therapy on Women with Depression

This section discusses the effects of art therapy in helping women identify and share their immigration experience as well as their emotional and psychological struggles with sadness, loss and depression.

Bermudez and ter Maat (2011) share that art therapy facilitates the Hispanic client's ability to gain insight and self-understanding of their personal issues. Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trochez and Zuniga (2014), discovered through their work with immigrant women that the art process not only provided meaningful data for the observers, but also permitted the women in the focus group to identify and contribute the emotional outcomes such as sadness, loss and depression that became a significant piece of their immigration story. Bermudez and ter Maat (2011) found that Hispanic clients favored three-dimensional art techniques (masks, clay,

sewing, and crafts) compared to two-dimensional (drawing and painting). Reynolds (2000) investigated the textile arts and its role in helping women cope with depression as well as unresolved grief. Collier (2011) shares that textile handcrafting provided women physical and indefinable benefits as well as a space to explore their personal stories. Reynolds (2000) shares that depressed women who engaged in textile and needlework expressed a consciousness of their desire to learn how to confront overwhelming thoughts and feelings about themselves. Furthermore, Collier (2011) found that women used textile making to find peace, feel centered, to establish some control over their lives and as an opportunity to enjoy the creative process.

Cultural Awareness in Art Therapy

Bermudez and Maat (2011) address the cultural competency of art therapy by stating that art therapy is the result of Euro American society where art therapists need to culturally adapt treatment to address issues of acculturation and immigration. Hocoy (2010) reiterates this by stating, “Western constructs have no cross-cultural equivalents” (p.143). Ciornal (1983) states that therapist’s who work with Latinos and other minorities, need to consider a clients’ background such as their socio-economic status when it comes to therapy. She further states therapists need to explore their own biases and prejudice by looking into the subcultures, levels of acculturation and outside oppression that often becomes internalized.

In terms of art therapy Hocoy (2002) states the levels of acculturation that clients have determines if art therapy is the right intervention. According to Hocoy, someone who has a higher degree of identification with the dominant culture or assimilation would be better than someone who is marginalized. An example of this is how collage seems to be one of the chosen mediums in using in art therapy. Collage helps clients express the transition of acculturation into the new culture (Wood, 2010). Ciornal (1983) states art therapy is a good treatment for Latinos

since artistic expression is part of their culture; art is integrated within the culture such as the clothing during festivals, decoration used in rituals and in the churches.

Bermudez and Maat (2011) discuss the limitations of art therapy, such as language barriers and resistance to treatment. This problem may be helped through the materials used in art therapy. Landgarten (1994) states Hispanics usually choose images from the same culture, and are able to have a positive transference. Furthermore, Landgarten states art therapy could bridge the space between the client and therapist creating a stronger therapeutic relationship. (Wood, 2010). Linesch, Ojeda, Fuster, Moreno and Solis (2014) share that through the use of art materials, women were able to create a safe space that provided containment by offering them a sense of control and freedom. Ciornal (1983) concurs that art therapy is a good treatment for Latinos since artistic expression is imbedded in the culture and evident in their churches, decorations during rituals and clothing during festivals.

Form of Communication

Linesch et al., (2014) states that art therapy provides a sense of community, facilitates the voice of an individual, and assists in psychological problems. Art therapy can also be a method in unearthing and creating a unification of their immigration and acculturation experience (Emberley, 2005). Lemzoudi (2007) concurs by stating, art therapy allows children who experience anxiety and depression a channel to help them adjust, integrate their immigration experience, and increase their self-esteem.

When there is a lack of proficiency in the language, images from the artwork illustrates the internal emotions and painful experiences of Immigration and Acculturation, which otherwise may have been lost in translation (Lemzoudi, 2007). Wood (2010) concurs in suggesting that there is a universality of language within images.

In children, art therapy helps to communicate through the non-verbal aspects of the image making process, allowing them to express feelings that they may not have been able to communicate verbally (Lemzoudi, 2007). This is particularly helpful for children who may struggle to verbally communicate the difficulties of the immigration and acculturation process (Rosenbelt, 2010). Rousseau, Lacroix, Bagilishya and Heusch (2011) suggest children with limited English can communicate with the art, using metaphors that are found in the dominant culture.

Common imagery

Wood (2010) posits that when art is created within a group, it assists the clients in overcoming feelings of loneliness and normalizes their experience. She also states art therapy groups provide the clients with a sense of accomplishment. Linesch, Aceves, Quezada, Trochez and Zuniga (2012) share that the themes uncovered during a women's group revealed their exploration of gender roles, issues of religion, faith and stressors brought on by immigration and acculturation; sadness, loss and depression. In children's artwork themes of socialization, self-exploration and identity issues are depicted in the art (Wood, 2010).

Landgarten (1994) suggests that the artwork can help clients feel that any problem could be brought up, allowing them to communicate their experience. Wood (2010) reiterates this idea by stating art therapy often helps women reveal negative thoughts about what they had left behind and allowed them to process symptoms of depression. In men's group, themes of psychological and emotional stress were discussed and explored. This included depicting family and religion as a way to cope with stressors. Furthermore the uncertainty of returning to their country of origin was also explored (Linesch et al., 2012).

Linesch et al. (2012) report art therapy helps adolescents accommodate to both cultures in forming an identity by helping them process any challenges brought on by acculturation. Wood (2010) states art therapy helps adolescents connect their distressful emotions of isolation and feelings of loss. Linesch et al., (2012) emphasize art therapy gives adolescents a way to explore issues between their parents regarding their homeland and the new adopting culture. Lemzoudi (2007) offers art therapy can help children and adolescents gain a greater sense and meaning of their cultural identity by working through and processing their traumatic histories.

Conclusion

The literature illustrated how Hispanic/Latino/Latina's are impacted by the immigration and acculturation experience. The literature specifically focused on how the development of identity, depressive symptomology and the various mental health needs were influenced and/or generated by the immigration and acculturation experience. The level of acculturation appeared to have a significant effect on how Hispanic/Latino/Latina individuals coped or adjusted to the changes during the process. The significance of the family revealed how roles and expectations where either supportive or detrimental to their sense of identity, level of depressive symptoms and other mental health needs. The art therapy literature, although limited, also included the approach used by art therapists to assist Hispanic/Latino/Latina's manage their depressive symptoms and as a modality for them to share their immigration and acculturation stories.

RESEARCH APPROACH

We explore the issues that stem from immigration and acculturation using an art-based research approach. As a group of three Latina artists from different generations of immigration backgrounds art-based research allows us to conceptualize and explore the problems with immigration and acculturation in a creative way.

Kapitan (2010) states that art-based research attempts to challenge, and highlight knowledge rather than validating it. She further states a problem can be changed into a creative problem. Steps in art-based research include having an awareness of an issue, then attempting to intentionally recreate it. Finally through transformation and clarification it can be critiqued through a public viewing. Some approaches Kapitan (2010) mentions practices are for reflecting and understanding and including metaphorical dialogue with the data. In this case the art making is a way to gather and analyze data, which is used to construct knowledge.

Barone & Eisner (2012) state that art-based research is a different way of remaking the social world. In terms of an audience, it is much broader than other methods, such as quantitative or qualitative research. Having a broader audience is a way to invite others into the experience of a space that was out of reach to them. Barone & Eisner (2012) further state that art-based research better addresses the social issue in question when the researchers are knowledgeable in the issue and are also artists.

McNiff (1998) states that art-based research helps prospective therapists to recognize the struggles that come with artistic expression. In this type of research, the images are the boundaries rather than the rules of participation. Arts- based research stems from the process and the relationship with the images that come from it. McNiff (1998) further states that art-

based research must explore the qualities of the work, within a space that understands and highlights its exclusive features and correlates with the pros and cons of the process.

Definitions of Terms

As a group we have collectively identified these terms, for the purpose of understanding the cultural experience of immigration and acculturation. In addition the group has chosen to use the terms Hispanic and Latino/Latina interchangeably to reflect not only the personal identification of the individuals in the group, but also the literature. As defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2014) Hispanic is defined as an individual who originally comes from an area where Spanish is spoken especially those from Latin America.

Hispanic: coming originally from an area where Spanish is spoken and especially from Latin America; also: of or relating to Hispanic people (n.d.). Hispanic. Retrieved November 24, 2014, from [Hispanic - Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#)

Latino: a person who was born or lives in South America, Central America or Mexico or a person in the U.S whose family is originally from South America, Central America or Mexico. Hispanic. Retrieved November 24, 2014, from [Hispanic - Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary](#)

Acculturation- a multidimensional process consisting of the confluence among heritage-cultural and receiving-cultural practices, values, and identifications. (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga & Szapocznik, 2010, p. 237)

Assimilation: process by which immigrant groups come to share a common culture, typically to the dominant culture, in order to gain equal access to the opportunity structure of the dominant society (Peguro, 2011, p. 697).

Enculturation: the process of selectively acquiring or retaining elements of one's heritage culture while also selectively acquiring some elements from the receiving cultural context (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga & Szapocznik, 2010, p. 239).

Familismo: a multidimensional construct encompassing several dimensions, including support among family members, strong ties between family members, behavioral and attitude perceptions of the family, and family honor and obligation toward the family (Marrs & Hysjulien, 2013, p.380).

Familism: highly integrated families with supportive extended family members (Marrs Fuchsel, Murphy, & Dufresne, 2012, p. 264).

Machismo: a set of behaviors among Hispanic males as generally having characteristics of being dominant, superior, and strong in relationships (Marrs Fuchel, Murphy, & Duresne, 2012, p.307).

Marianismo: idea or set of beliefs rooted in Catholicism that refers to the mother [the Virgin Mary] of Jesus and that signifies women's experiences with the meaning and concept of submissiveness in relationships (Marrs Fuchel, Murphy, & Duresne, 2012, p.265).

Resilience: a function of psychological and cultural flexibility to define oneself in multiple ways and fashions (Trueba, 2002, p.8).

Design of Study

Sampling

As second year students at Loyola Marymount University in the Marital and Family and Clinical Art Therapy graduate program we have based our research on our own personal experiences and individual agencies. We briefly introduce each of our agencies, as the case material is directly related and responsible for prompting our research and investigation of our own personal experiences. The three agencies that have been explored include agency one, where Barraza was placed in the School Based Program of a DMH community mental health agency. The School Based Program provides mental health services and case management services to children, adolescents and families in more than 20 school sites. Agency two, where Sanchez was placed is a community based DMH mental health clinic that serves youth and their families of low social economic status and underserved communities. Agency three, where Solis was placed is a community mental health setting that provides primary care, specialty care, mental health, dental and health education for over 106,000 clients annually. Services include diagnosis, treatment, medication, follow up care and laboratory tests. Particular emphasis is placed on the needs of women, children, the homeless and those with chronic diseases. Ninety-seven percent are low-income and nearly three-quarters are uninsured.

Gathering of Data

As a group we have collectively chosen to approach the gathering of data in a way that divides the process over a span of five meetings. The initial meeting, spans approximately three hours and consists of each group member bringing in a piece of artwork that has been done in response to the research that has been read. As a group we look at how each individual has metabolized or processed the information in attempts to bridge the reading with the art process. For our second, third, and fourth meeting each member selects an essential element that was triggered by a client, whether it entail their artwork or something that was expressed during the session. Each researcher brings in a prompt for an arts-based exploration that will look deeper into what was triggered and the experience of being triggered for each researcher, In the final and fifth session all the artwork we have created is reviewed to identify themes between each researchers piece individually and then across all the participants.

Analysis of Data

Each piece of art is analyzed and studied in search of emergent themes that connect with each researcher's personal immigration and acculturation story and the clinical work experience. The first art piece, created during week one through week four, connects directly to each researcher's personal response to the topics discussed in the literature as well as their own personal immigration and acculturation story. The three art responses created during week two through week four explore the triggering and counter transference issues encountered during the clinical experience of that particular week.

The literature review is selectively used as it relates to the themes that emerge from the artwork. It is used to assist each researcher in establishing connections between their own personal acculturation and immigration story along with what is shared and triggered by the clients during sessions. Each researcher creates an excerpt that describes their process while working on their ongoing personal piece as well as the response art created after the identified triggering clinical experience. The researchers meet on the fifth week to share their personal artwork and three trigger art response pieces with the research team. The research team agrees that researcher Solis, scribes the findings and emergent themes of each individual members art piece in separate scrolls. A discussion and consensus is established by the research team in determining the emergent themes that develop in the presentation of the artwork. The emergent themes are tracked through an analysis of the 12 pieces of artwork that comprised the research project.

RESULTS

Presentation of Data

Introduction

Data was first gathered when all three researchers and mentor met at the department's art studio to discuss and create their immigration stories. Each researcher shared their stories in accordance to their generation of immigration: first, second and third. After discussing their stories, researchers highlighted similarities and differences in their experiences. Researchers then set out to work on their art pieces that would encompass their immigration and acculturation stories. Although not mandated, each participant was encouraged to use various materials and conduct the work in the department's studio. The initial piece, unlike the proceeding pieces, was allowed to be continuous, working through out the data gathering. The following week researchers met to begin the work on the trigger art responses.

Researchers met for three consecutive weeks to create artworks that were based on their "triggers," counter transferences or feelings aroused in their clinical work. The directive was to use triggers that were linked to issues of immigration and acculturation that resonated with each participant and had been specifically experienced a week before meeting. After all three participants discussed their triggers; they moved to create artwork that reflected their feelings and experiences. This process was repeated two more times over the next two weeks, resulting in twelve pieces of artwork that became the data for this research project. Additional data included researchers' journal writings. The next sections of this paper discuss the data in order of researcher Solis, researcher Barraza, and researcher Sanchez. Given the nature of the data, the summaries are written in first person in order to capture the lived experience.

Researcher A.

Figure 1.A

My first art piece, figure 1A, represents my immigration story. Within the piece are drawings and collage images that highlighted important people and events in my life. The work includes three figures: my father, mother and myself. All three figures are represented at an age when they initially immigrated to America. While my father and mother are represented in their twenties, I am depicted as a child. Along with the figures, is a timeline, with dates and labels that reflect the goal of the American dream. This dream was first implemented by my father who had immigrated (in his words) for a better life and to give his children the education he did not have. The timeline begins with the year I was born, followed by the year I received my residency, then the year I became an American citizen. The timeline finally ends with the year I graduated college.

The process of data gathering first began by deciding which parts of my actual immigration story I wanted to include and exclude. Once I came to an agreement with myself I moved to the layout, committing first to the medium and then materials. The entire piece is made up of articles used in our research, in order to represent my immigration and acculturation experience. I used information that stemmed from personal memories, and from paperwork that was linked to my own immigration experience. The materials I used in this piece were quite diverse, both in medium and in structure. This included using collage, sharpies, charcoal and pastels.

The following three pieces were based on my triggers; experiences and feelings that stemmed from my clinical work. The process of selecting a trigger was organic, being attuned with my feelings in sessions and choosing topics connected to my own acculturation and

immigration experiences, which I resonated with the most. After discussing my artwork with my research group we were then encouraged to set off and work on the artwork and then write on a journal that would track our process and feelings throughout our work. However, personally I did not do this. Instead I felt my writings became too personal to use. I used them instead to inspire my artwork.



Figure 1.A

Figure 2.A

Figure 2A represents my first trigger. The figure depicts a female profile made up of several writings. The writings, written in both Spanish and English are made of several examples of times when I translated for my parents. The figure is outlined, highlighted against a dark shadow. Within the figure is a highly detailed ear. The piece is also composed of two papers, toned and tracing paper and various inks materials and pens. I wanted to use materials that would depict how I felt as I translated and navigated in both languages. The two papers are juxtaposed one top on top of the other, making the writings illegible. The content of the writings include incidents of translating that were the most memorable.

Clinically the trigger stemmed from translating in a session for a bilingual family in which the children spoke predominately English while the parent only spoke Spanish. These writings represent my experiences and mixed feelings of translating. It is a piece that reflects my experience of growing up in a household where only Spanish was spoken and then being expected to translate English for my parents. While both papers depict the same profile silhouette, individually they include Spanish or English writings.

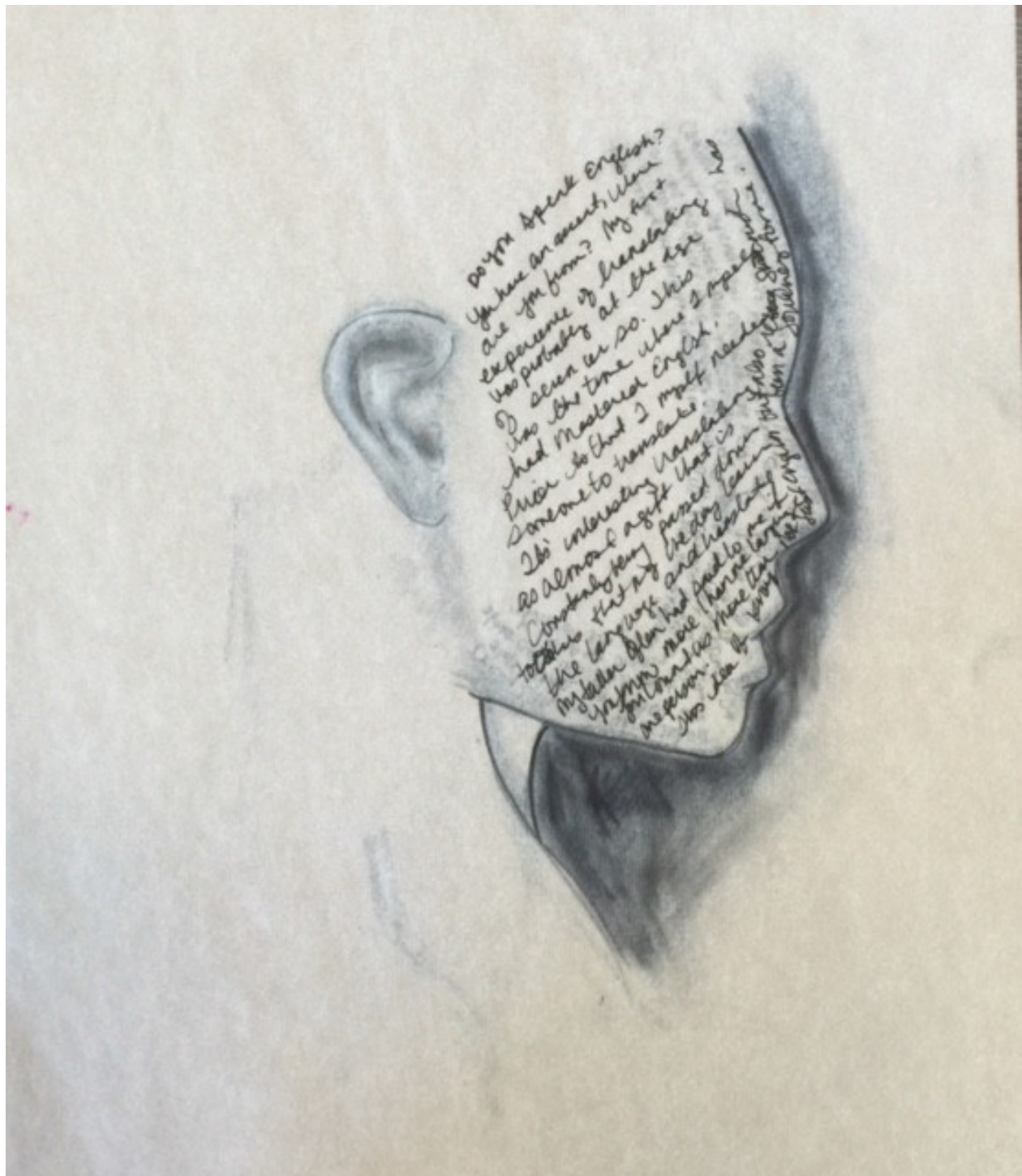


Figure 2.A front

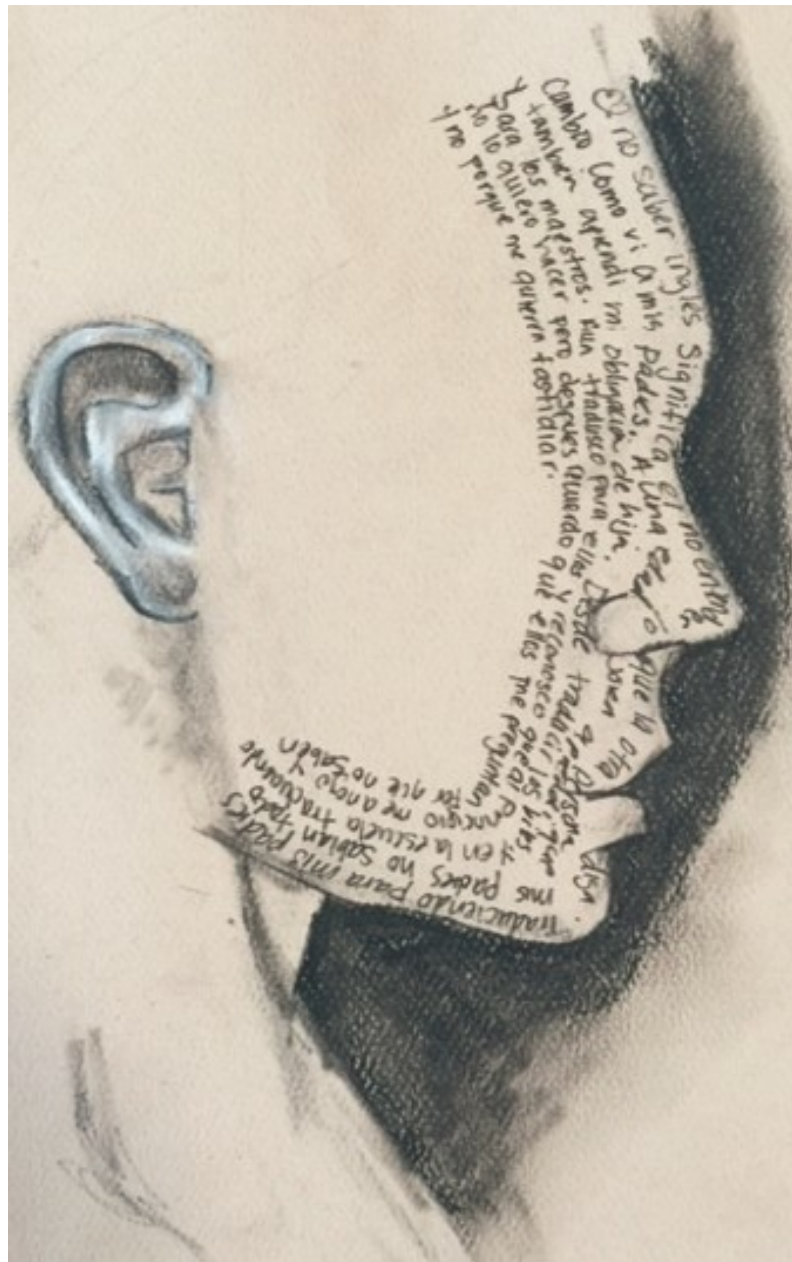


Figure 2.A back

Figure 3.A

Figure 3A, my second trigger is an apron. The apron is pink with blue flowers and a multicolored crosshatch pattern. Inside the apron is a pocket with the female symbol drawn outside of the pocket. The inside of the pocket contains cooking tools: rolling pan, spatula and a mixer utensil. On the waist line of the apron is a Spanish phrase that reads, “Ser mujer is...” meaning, “to be a woman is to.”

The piece stems from a client sharing that he wanted to be different than his own father, who was in his view, a *machista* (a male chauvinist.) This client shared his father had the belief that of women and men had specific gender roles and men that should not be allowed to cook (something he wanted to do.) This belief resonated with me, reminding me of my own childhood to a time where I too wanted to learn how to cook but was turned away by my mother. My mother told me then that I could only learn to cook from her when I was ready to get married. I wanted to highlight the expectations of being female by creating an apron. The process of creating it was centered on using pastels, a medium that would highlight the bright colors found on Mexican aprons. Once finished, I decided to cut it out and staple it together creating a life size model of an apron.



Figure 3.A

Figure 4.A

By the time I got to figure 4.A, the process of identifying a trigger became difficult. Unlike the previous two pieces, where the experience of resonating with the clients was organic, I found myself feeling pressured to select anything that remotely resembled a triggering response. I believe this difficulty stemmed from the specific time frame that was required from us, coming up with a trigger a week before our research meeting. It was not until I began sharing

my clinical anecdote with the research group that I recognized how triggered I felt about what my client had shared in regards to his childhood experience. He named the difficulties of growing up in a hostile environment where his father physically abused his mother. This initially did not resonate with me, since growing up there was no domestic violence in our household. It was not until I heard my client disclose that his parents also hit him when I then was triggered. It made me think of my own childhood, in which my siblings and I were also hit. However, I also questioned whether or not I wanted to use it (as a trigger and to share with my research group) since now as an adult I have a better relationship with my parents. Once I was at peace with my decision I moved toward creating the art.

I wanted to create a piece that would reflect how I felt when I was a child and was reprimanded. Figure 4.A depicts a little girl who is looking down. Everything is in black and white with the exception of a red dress and ribbon that is worn by the girl. The background contains a crosshatch pattern and ink splatters. The figure is drawn on a large white paper using various writing materials: pencil, pen, and ink. These writing tools were used to create the patterns and intentional ink splatters within the figure. The dress is highlighted to represent my gender, culture and a time in my childhood where my first vivid memories begin.



Figure 4.A

Researcher B.

Figure 1.B

The initial art piece Figure 1.B, represents the ongoing process of my personal acculturation story as a second-generation Latina. For materials I chose a stretched canvas to hold my artwork. The first medium I used was acrylic paints as it represents the media that I felt

most comfortable with. I began at the bottom of the canvas with red brush strokes that resembled soft fur. It was interesting to see this portion of the painting turn soft as I recall having intense feelings of anger while I worked on this section of the painting. Painting the blue section was a completely different experience. The blue was supposed to resemble calm blue ocean waters with the intention to add life, such as sea turtles and exotic fish. This was questionably not added to the piece at the end. As I continued to paint, I immediately was drawn to the idea of creating a self-portrait. I added pinkish-red lips and outlined the rest of the face in pencil. By week two I decided to paint a brown tree that came to resemble the hair in my self-portrait. Trees have been a constant theme throughout the beginning of this research so it felt appropriate to add this element into this piece. I took a break from my personal piece until I approached week four. The sessions that were triggered by my client's provided a catalyst that pushed me to explore other mediums outside of my comfort zone. I began this new process by using green, textured paper, which I tore in the shape of leaves and glued it to the canvas and around the personal profile. I also explored collage images and text. The images were of a woman's eye, two pomegranates and a colorful design piece taken from "Latina Magazine." The text was also taken from "Latina Magazine" and emphasized anything that I felt connected to my personal ongoing story and process of acculturation.



Fl re I.B

Figure 2.B

The first trigger piece, Figure 2.B, was a highly emotional experience triggered by a family session with a Hispanic teenager and her mother. During the session, the client and her mother were both complaining about how “bossy and controlling” the client’s father was at home. As mom and client both shared, I noticed that I became angry and overwhelmed while listening to their story. The next week I shared my clinical trigger with the research group and research mentor. As I shared, it became obvious that I continued to feel overwhelmed and angry about last week’s triggering experience with this family. It took about an hour for me to engage in the art making process after sharing with the group. The response art was created in an art journal. For this piece I felt drawn to use collage imagery as well as pink masking tape, two-toned string and red foam stickers that resembled bloody teardrops. The first element of my collage piece was adding the pink masking tape, which in my mind is a symbol of femininity. I added the pink strips on the bottom, right hand side of the paper. I then proceeded to use the two-toned string. I began by twirling the string in the middle of the paper and just allowing it to create itself, moving it occasionally if it appeared too chaotic in my view and just glued it down as I went. Next, I added the collage image. It took some time to arrive at this image since I really wasn’t sure what I was looking for to begin with. I only replayed the story from the family session in my head. The moment I saw this picture, there was no doubt in my mind that I had to cut it out and implement it on my piece. It was the image of a young man, sitting down looking very upset, almost as if he was demanding something from the viewer. His placement on my collage became extremely triggering and I was taken by how the string naturally covered his mouth and wrapped around his arms. Next came the red teardrops, which appeared very telling of what I was feeling somatically and emotionally. In my journal excerpt I wrote, “As I created

this art piece, I began to re-experience feelings of anger and overwhelm. In addition, I felt resentful, frustrated, bitter and finally helpless. I realized that my client's story uncovered personal deep-rooted unresolved issues towards men that brought me intense pain and anger." I cried throughout the art process and found myself frustrated with my own conflicting feelings.



Figure 2.B

Figure 3.B

The second trigger art response Figure 3.B, was also created in the same art journal as Figure 2.B. This piece was in response to an in home family session with a female Hispanic client and her immigrant mother. During my clinical session, I noticed that I felt extremely frustrated with my client's mother. My client had begun making progress in treatment and was attempting to share this information with her mother. The client's mother invalidated my client's feelings about her progress in treatment by focusing only on how the client neglected to fulfill her needs. I shared my clinical trigger with the research team and research mentor in attempts to process the thoughts and feelings elicited from this session. After sharing with the research team, I engaged in the art process by looking through magazines in an effort to find images that could speak to the counter transference experience I encountered with the family. The piece consisted of collage images, text and patterned paper. I cut the center of the patterned paper to create a window. I found the image of a young girl, which I cut in half to create the window flaps in order to hide and reveal the text inside of the window box. The text inside contained thoughts of how it felt to feel my voice, thoughts and opinions being rejected or ignored growing up at home and in society. The excerpt from my journal reads, "I feel that it reveals my own inner struggle/conflict with all the messages that were delivered to me, which affected how I felt about myself, as well as who I felt I wanted to be." Those negative messages affected how I generally ended up viewing myself internally, inflicting a sense of insecurity.

The outside piece also reveals two sides of me that were visible to others: who I strived to be and who I was expected to be. I desired to be smart and to be seen that way. My family expected me to be "smart." I also viewed myself very childlike and in a sense was seen that way by some of my friends and family members. The childlike themes that I was tagged with were:

Naïve, innocent, childish, needing protection and being vulnerable. To some extent I embraced these labels but then also found them demeaning. Even on the outside, I struggled to decide why I embraced and rejected these labels.

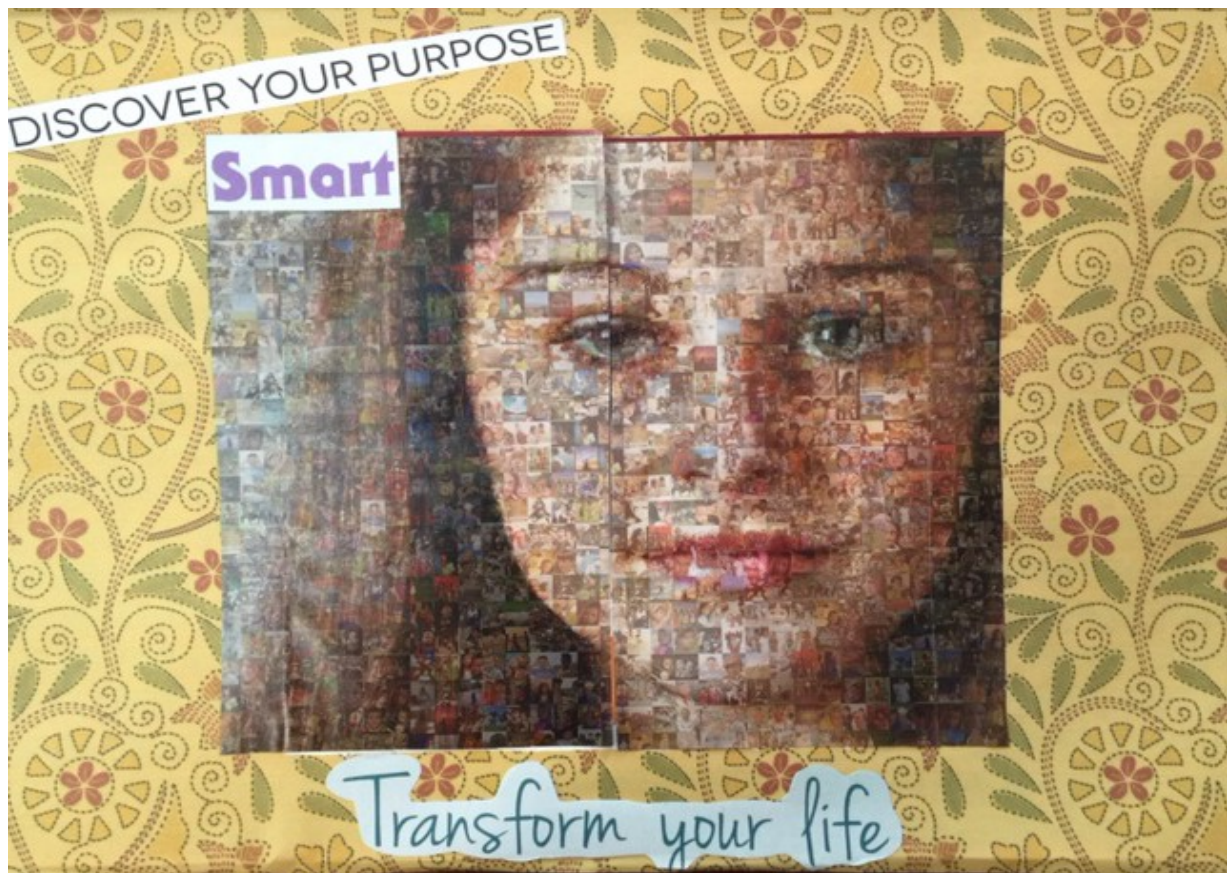


Figure 3.B front



Figure 3.B back

Figure 4.B

The third trigger art response, Figure 4.B, was the result of a different family session with the same client and mother discussed in Figure 2.B. This session triggered my own counter transference experience with the conflict I encountered growing up as an American Hispanic while being raised by immigrant parents. As I shared this experience with the research team and research mentor, I was confronted with the tension and struggle of the acculturation process as it relates to the family's cultural expectations and who the acculturating individual wants to be. This piece was also created in the art journal and the materials used where red, yellow, orange oil pastels and collage text from "Latina Magazine." The pastels were first integrated into the art journal, creating what appeared as volcanic fire, which spewed through the center and then outwards in a blaze. The collage text was incorporated into the artwork and used to title the piece

“My Latina Life”. The collage text also included, “is Latino culture holding you back?” in the center of the blazing fire, “The state of Spanglish” and “Werk it out” on the left hand side of the explosion and “off to the home country” on the right side of the journal. An excerpt from my journal reads, “The conflict between the mother and daughter reminded me of the conflicts I had growing up as an American born Latina whose parents expectations differed from my own. I felt that some of those expectations may have been holding me back from becoming the person I wanted to be but at the same time shaping who I chose to become.”

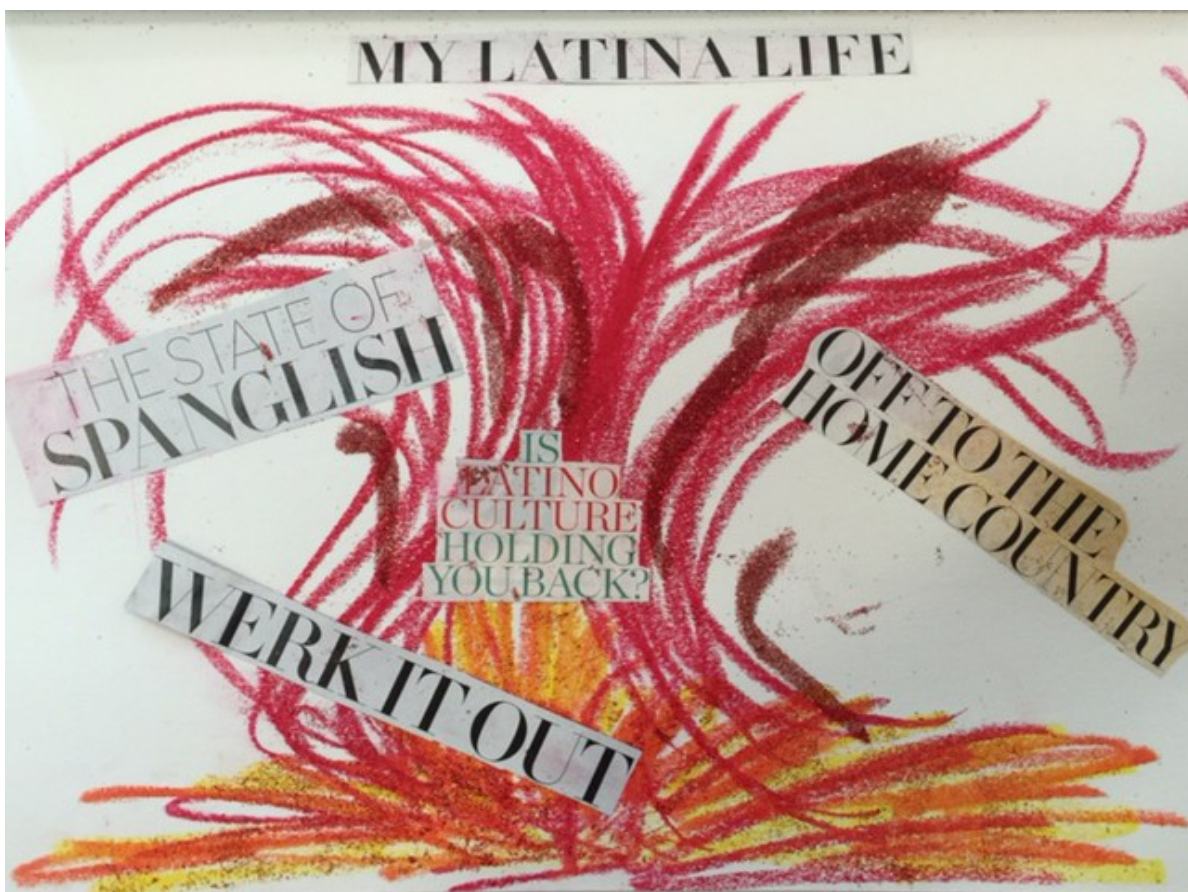


Figure 4.B

Researcher C.

Figure 1.C

For my initial response a careful and detailed investigation was unfolded, informed by the lengthy investigation of the literature reviewed and transcribed months before. Having been triggered with insecurities and thoughts of uncertainty, the initial piece as seen in Figure C.1, was a result of a lengthy process in which my family's immigration story was investigated through a series of interviews. This investigation was used to inform me and uncover the raw and vulnerable stories of generations before that had acculturated through out the years. Materials used for the initial piece were found materials specifically provided by the land but at times overlooked or disregarded as unusable or undesirable. The following excerpt from a journal was written to coincide with the process of making the art: " I made it a point to avoid all opportunities of sharing my families immigration story. I always had the sense that my story was not as significant, this idea being specifically highlighted by the fact that I am a third generation." As reflected in the journal excerpt, there was a sense from the beginning that I did not have much to offer to this exploration. I assumed and labeled myself as unimportant, a label that was reflected through out my entire process. With this in mind I felt it made sense to choose materials that had been taken by the land. They were materials that are often trimmed and disposed of to leave stronger and more plentiful foliage. Grape vines in this case were the core while wild vines made up the outer structure. The interweaving of the materials using twine to unify the different materials was a process that represented the connection of the different generations. Just as I had investigated my family's story, I was finding the links and connections to the previous generations within my own personal art reflection. As a result I ended up with a

visual interpretation of that process. As reflected in my work, I was attempting to bridge what I could and found meaningful connections of my own. It was not until I further explored the art process that I was able to make sense of what those bridges would later represent.



Figure 1.C

Figure 2.C

Going into the first trigger I believed I was ready for what ever my client would be bringing in, or so I thought. Fig C.2 was influenced by the first trigger I choose to share with the research group. It was based on the direct counter transference and experience of the client bringing into the discussion generational expectations and societal expectations that they face within the family. My choice reflected this implication of having to make due with what resources are provided. I combed the beaches sifting through the rocks and sand to collect driftwood of all shapes and sizes. In addition to the driftwood, wire, fishing line, and fishing weights were added to provide additional support to my piece. The following is an excerpt from journal writings, “ I choose the driftwood because to me it was a glimpse or the remains of what the driftwood had endured it felt symbolic of an unknown and unspoken journey. I’ve often considered the acculturative process to be similar In that it goes unsaid until it is challenged by the individual’s own idea of balancing their experiences and they are faced with challenges in society that contradict their generational views.” The material’s juxtaposition parallel a balancing act that often occurs when navigating through generational and societal expectations. In my family there are key expectations to not let the family down, not be like others who take advantage of the system, not to get pregnant, and to not forget that family comes first. All of this is expected while one is required to navigate and find their way in a society that encourages individualism and a separation of family. The structure of my piece reflects this delicate and vulnerable navigation that has taken place within my understanding of the expectations set up for me. Using different materials that contrasted one another and having them coexist directly spoke to the dissimilarity of two very important set of expectations. This trigger challenged me and

called attention to a very delicate matter that continues to be a part of my immigration and acculturative process.



Figure 2.C

Figure 3.C

For my third art reflection, as seen in Fig C.3, again the client brought in her struggle of expectations that this time directly contrasted those of the mother's expectations. Although a piece had been previously done surrounding the societal expectations verses generational expectations, this trigger directly addressed inner generational expectations that are very prevalent during the immigration and acculturative experience. Based on the client's mom's experiences it has become difficult for mom to understand, support, and have compassion for her daughter. Due to the lack of communication and inability to validate the client's feelings a misunderstanding of one another's generational struggles and experiences has occurred. As a third generation Latina I have experienced similar expectations and have often reflected on the words, "get over it" and "I went through it why can't you" or "you have so much more than what I had why are you complaining" and finally "you are so ungrateful". Even as a third generation I continue be compared with the generational expectations and experiences that have come before mine. How can life be so difficult for me when I have not had to face some of the struggles previous generations have had to endure? This perception led me to fear that my story would continue to be invalidated. Through the session with my client and her mom, I was once again reminded what it meant to be third generation. This art piece allowed me to reflect on the tension that is caused within the family structure and how it can be challenging to validate and honor the child, parents, and grandparent's experiences along with the roles that have endured. I reflected on the pressure that I have often felt that comes from generations before me. There are just so many generational expectations that go unspoken but are ones that constantly have me thinking, I must do better, I must be better, I cant be like others who are "shameful" which ultimately has developed an inner struggle in my heart that I am often embarrassed to admit. A sense of anger is

illuminated in my journal excerpt, “I feel embarrassed it has influenced a sense of elitism one that I believe may be related to me being a third generation. It is painful to admit because I get a sense of denying a part of myself in the culture, which makes it difficult to identify as Hispanic/Latina/Mexican. At times I feel disconnected with my family because I have done things differently. I tend to experience pressure and isolation because of the fear that my family may see me and think, “Oh you think you have it hard, well I had it harder. I’d like to see you try. You aren’t good enough smart enough. Oh just get over it. If I did it you can do it too. Stop crying. Are you seriously crying again, what for?” The pressures that come in the acculturation process and the loss of where you came from are ongoing conflicts that become more prevalent when going from generation to generation. There are active decisions being made of what to keep, what to let go and how one can still feel connected to their primary culture. It becomes a blend of things that allow us as individuals to feel connected to our families. It is an ongoing process, just as reflected in my unfinished art piece, that there is tension interwoven within the family that is ongoing and will never cease to exist. This exploration was the most difficult and most triggering, forcing me to reflect and ground myself before moving onto the next and final trigger.



Figure 3.C

Figure 4.C

Towards the final days of this art exploration I realized I had felt more exposed and vulnerable than ever before. I was beginning to worry about the repercussions of telling my story, how I might be judged and how my family may see me. This led me to close myself from looking for the final trigger to bring into the group. When asked to create artwork for the final piece, I found that I attempted to disconnect myself from the experience by not initially choosing a trigger. With the intention of keeping myself safe, it was difficult to identify a trigger or so I thought. It was not until I listened to the discussion brought up amongst my research group that I realized there were triggers all around me. I became aware that as a defense, I was shutting my eyes to the triggers around me in attempt to ground and protect myself. The previous week had been so painful for me that I was subconsciously avoiding the final trigger. I wanted containment

and safety because the final trigger was just that the final one. In Fig C.4 the trigger highlighted the demand for working parents and kids being left alone at home, taking care of siblings, the pressure of being the oldest child, not letting your parents down and not allowing others around you look down on you or the family. There is a saying in my family that comes from my father, “We children are a reflection of how our parents raised us” that has always stuck with me and has led me to believe that I have a responsibility to my family and especially my siblings. It brings into question how a family of immigrants is supposed to raise their children, be a good role model, support their family, and be present in the child’s life in such a demanding society. My grandparents experienced this demand as they worked long and difficult hours. They were laborers working for the Bracero program, a program that contracted Mexican immigrants to work on a temporary contract in the United States. Their labor included working in the strawberry fields, on the freeways, railroads and in the factories where they were exposed to toxins that ultimately jeopardized their health. My parents had me when they were just nineteen years old. Both were fresh out of high school, expected to work and raise a child, all while being children themselves. This ongoing demand for developing a work ethic was and continues to be unmatched by anything else. Consequently, I was expected to follow the same pattern, which brought up phrases such as, “you need to help out, you need to do this, and you don’t have a choice.” An excerpt of my journal reflects the challenges of the pressure, “what does it mean to be an American a Mexican a Hispanic? Who am I? How can I define who I am? Where do I fit in the narrative of my family?” I used a pre-existing frame to contain my final art process. I used the frame of the loom as structure and used the stringing of the loom as a meditative and self-soothing process. Other elements from past triggers were used to bring the entire process together. My intention was to bring this exploration of triggers full circle. I chose to stop at a

minimal point because this idea of keeping it simple and unfinished reflected my ongoing understanding of being exposed and vulnerable. Even now I look at the body of work I have created and I can see the interconnections and underlining themes that relate and coincide with every trigger that was brought to light. There are so many things that have gone unsaid but to the best of my ability, I have attempted to open up my perspective and better understand what it means to be a third generation Latina.



Figure 4.C

Analysis of Data

As a group it was decided that the method of analyzing the data created over the duration of the past four weeks would be developed by adding an additional day in which all three members of the research group and research mentor would attend. Each researcher began with four pieces of data, which were individually analyzed. Each initial piece was analyzed and reviewed by the researcher while another researcher volunteered to scribe and take notes on large pieces of paper. Once the researcher completed their review of their piece the scribe read back what had been written down as the researcher took a step back from the piece. It was uncovered that there were specific themes that were reoccurring in the first transcription. Once identified the process was completed and was repeated three additional times. The order was decided after one of the researchers choose to go last after being triggered by the material being discussed. As a result the order fell into place as first, second, and third generation. As each piece was reviewed, the group discussed and found similarities in the data analyzed. Once all pieces were reviewed and transcribed one researcher volunteered to take the transcribed paper and convert it into a digital chart in which was sent to everyone to double check. As a unifying end, each researcher was given a copy of the chart to continue ongoing further processing through written documentation. The four emergent themes were assigned a color: Red for the theme “Sense of Identity,” orange for the theme “Choice of Materials,” blue for the theme “Impact of the Family” and green for the theme “Tension and Struggle.”

Findings

Introduction

Hearing the immigration and acculturation stories of the clients, each researcher identified a counter transference trigger that transpired and was documented through a personal art response. As each researcher looked into their own personal piece and the art responses triggered by the clients, these four themes emerged: Sense of Identity, Impact of the Family, Tension/Struggle and Choice of Materials,

Sense of Identity

The arts-based approach allowed each researcher to document and share their personal acculturation/immigration story and revealed the differences and similarities between each research member who identify as first, second and third generation Hispanic/Latinas. The theme of Identity differed between each member although some correlations were found between the research members.

Researcher A

The theme of identity is first found in figure 1A, Solis's immigration story. In this piece, identity is portrayed through a set of labels placed on a timeline, highlighting how Solis felt during her journey towards becoming an American citizen. In figure 2A, the theme of identity is found in how Solis identified herself as being bilingual and having to translate for her parents. In figure 3A, the second trigger, the theme of identity is revealed through the depiction of a specific gender role that was expected of Solis. In figure 4A Solis identified identity by exploring the way she was reprimanded in childhood.

Researcher B

Barraza, who identifies as a second-generation Latina, discovered that her personal acculturation and immigration art piece Figure 1.B emphasized the identity theme of “Being Latina.” The first trigger art response Figure 2.B identified “Helpless” and “Machista.” The second trigger piece Figure 3.B, revealed “Not wanting to be seen as insecure”, “Cultural Language & Traditions” and “Immigrant Parents.” The third trigger art piece Figure 4.B uncovered “Cultural Identity”, “Latina”, “Acculturation” and “Spanglish”.

Researcher C

Sanchez identifies themes of belonging and not belonging as heavily influencing her work throughout the art making process. This theme directly coincided with the first emergent theme “Sense of Identity.” Sanchez self-identifies as a third generation immigrant, influenced by the narratives of her own immigration and acculturative story. Looking at Figure 1.C, as quoted by Sanchez “my story was not valued” carries a sense of self-identifying as unimportant which goes on to be further identified in Figure 2.C as quoted, “feeling vulnerable and non labeling” is reflective of uncertainty about how to label oneself and where her story fits in. There appeared to be self-identification that continued to be triggered as the weeks went by bringing in additional triggers and the artwork as seen in Fig 3.C and Fig 4.C where expectations were challenged and what it means to live up to a certain label. At times a sense of identity was difficult to grasp in Sanchez’s works, which partially may relate to the inner struggles Sanchez continues to have identifying herself in her culture.

Impact of the Family

The second emergent theme was Impact of the Family. The research team discovered that family played a significant role in each of the art responses that were created. In addition, the

researchers encountered familiar correlations with each other's response art in connection to this theme.

Researcher A

The theme of family is first evident in figure 1A. In this piece, Solis does not only draw her parents but also shows their influence by including a time line that ends in her graduation, further highlighting her father's emphasis towards an education. In figure 2A, the theme of family was found in Solis's feelings towards translating for her family, found in the writings of the artwork. In Figure 3A, the theme of family was represented by creating an apron to represent a gender role that was first placed on Solis by her mother. Finally in figure 4A, the theme of family was identified through Solis's labeling of her mother as being the main parent who would reprimand her.

Researcher B

Barraza identified the Impact of the family theme in her personal piece Figure 1.B, as "immigrant parents." The first trigger art piece Figure 2.B contained "Having no voice in the family" and "unable to speak up due to gender." The second trigger piece Figure 3.B, displayed "facts for parents" "expectations of immigrant parents" and "hidden piece of a family." The third trigger piece Figure 4.B contained "mother/daughter conflict."

Researcher C

Just as the theme of "Impact of the Family" was evident in the researchers personal pieces, it was heavily highlighted in Sanchez's body of work. There are common underlining layers that unite the four pieces in Sanchez's work "exposure", "societal expectations", and "generational expectations", "parental expectations", all of which are impacted by the family. Sanchez identity as a third generation includes the narratives and expectations that are

implemented by generations before. A sense of responsibility and pressure is as a result heavily waited as the generations in Sanchez families continue to grow. This need for structure within the generation and the expectations of situations to fall a certain way is reflected in Sanchez' body of work and is especially reflective in the process. Each piece figure 1.C, 2.C, 3.C, and 4.C reflect a structure within a structure that at first glance looks solid and strong but if challenged becomes vulnerable and delicate. This process resembles the process of the impact of the family and the family's expectations. At any given moment, Sanchez's work can fall apart revealing a much more vulnerable process, which as a result is heavily waited and narrated by the impact of the family.

Tension and Struggle

The theme of tension and struggle was defined as being the difficult thoughts and feelings that emerged in the process of the artwork. The artwork revealed how each researcher encountered tension/struggle with their personal immigration and acculturation story as well as the triggering experience in the clinical work.

Researcher A

The theme of tension and struggle is first evident in figure 1A. Solis identified the struggle of navigating between two languages and cultures. While in figure 2A, Solis identified her feelings of ambivalence over having to translate for her parents. Figure 3A, Solis identified the struggles of learning to cook but being turned away by her mother. Finally, in figure 4A Solis's struggle to differentiate discipline from possible child abuse is transparent in the depiction of her child self.

Researcher B

Barraza uncovered “tug of war” and “what to take and push aside” as themes of Tension and Struggle in Figure 1.B. In Figure 2.B, Barraza found “overwhelmed, anxious & angry,” “controlled by men,” chaotic” and “unraveled.” Figure 3.B revealed, “struggle,” “internal conflict,” “duality of what is outside not necessarily on the inside” and “control.” Figure 4.B contained “anger/disagreement,” “Mothers expectations vs. daughter” and “cultural identity.”

Researcher C

Tension and struggle is seen through out the entirety of Sanchez’s body of work as tension that develops and evolves within the bodywork is apparent. In figure 1.C, 2.C, 3.C, and 4.C string of some sort is used to reflect this tension and ultimate struggle experienced in Sanchez’s process. Tension and struggle is an ongoing theme within Sanchez’s narrative and understanding of her own family’s immigration and acculturation story that never seems to dissipate. It’s this tension and struggle that at times breaks down Sanchez’s inner thoughts but ultimately result in bringing Sanchez closer to an understanding of her role as a third generation Latina.

Choice of Materials

The fourth theme that emerged in the artwork is choice of materials. The researchers found that the choice of materials connected with the intention of the research being conducted.

Researcher A

In figure 1A Solis chose her materials unintentionally, using collage images, pens, and pastels to externalize her immigration story. In figure 2A, Solis used the materials: paper, pen, and charcoal in an illegible way. In figure 3A, Solis chose vibrant colors when choosing pastels,

to reflect her Hispanic/Latino culture. In Figure 4A, Solis chose to use draw on paper and use various writing tools: markers, and color pencils.

Researcher B

Barraza's personal piece identified "collage" as a theme for Choice of Materials. The first trigger art response Figure 1.B identified the pink masking tape and "two-toned paper", the second piece "collage" and "patterned paper", the third piece "text collage", "red glitter", "tactile materials" and "vibrant colors".

Researcher C

Looking at the careful consideration of materials used in Sanchez's work, it was important to select everyday materials that were common as seen in Figure 1.C, 2.C, and 3.C. Materials such as withered vines, driftwood, fallen seed pods from trees, and any other "found objects" overlooked or disregarded that were produced from the land were important to this process. As Sanchez considered the importance of using materials that came from nature it could be said that they were what help keep the process rooted and "grounded" in the present moment. Sanchez used materials to reflect a journey a story of some sort that was not easily noticeable until further exploration and time was spent on the individual pieces. Some materials such as the string in Figure 3.C represented the "tension" experienced in the process. As a whole these four pieces represent a story just as their materials hold one as well. This consideration of keeping the experience organic and using the resources provided continued to be important for the entirety of the experience. Reusing materials from previous art explorations were important to tie the whole experience together. This narrative needed, at least for the time being, a placeholder with space for further and ongoing exploration beyond this experience.

Meanings

Introduction

The themes that emerged from each researcher's personal piece and art responses triggered by the clients, revealed different meanings for each member. Meanings such as Identity, Impact of the Family, Choice of Materials and Tension and Struggle overlapped between researchers. Each one contributed a different interpretation based on their own life and clinical experience. Parra, Cardona et al (2004) recognized there are a multitude of influences within the home and outside world that impact the success and quality of the acculturative experience.

Sense of Identity

All three researchers' artworks connected with themes of *familismo*, acculturative stress, cultural identity and the impact of specific gender roles. Each researcher's immigration and acculturation story was evident in their body of work.

Solis, Barraza, and Sanchez each identified labels that either defined or challenged their views of themselves Solis used these labels in her art piece. Several of Solis' pieces explored the theme of cultural identity, gender roles, and expectations that were placed on her by her mother. As seen in figure 1.A, Solis identified labels by placing them on a time line, which documented specific moments throughout her life and reflected on the influence of cultural identity. At times these labels sided more with the Hispanic/Latina/Latino, while other labels reflected more of an American identity. In Figure 2.B Barraza discovered that the *machista* identity of the Latino/Hispanic men in her life reflected in her artwork and impacted her self-perception to create the identity of helpless Latina/Hispanic woman. Feeling helpless led to developing

additional feelings of depression, which affected her self-esteem and affected the acculturation process.

Sanchez found the presence of labels to also be relevant in her art. In Figure C.1, Sanchez reflected on how a self-imposed label of not being good enough added to her pain and feelings of exclusion. These feelings of loss reflect the general literature of O'Connor, Berry, Weiss and Gilbert's, (2002), who suggest that women carry a higher prevalence of depressive symptoms due to their struggle with negative emotional reactions towards self.

Labeling appears to be an ongoing experience that was reflected throughout the researchers' work and general literature. Parra Cardona et al (2004) notes that immigrants may take an approach in which they pick and choose which elements to keep, risking emotional cut off if they give up their cultural identity. As experienced by the first, second, and third generation researchers, labeling held a great significance in the exploration and processing of their artwork.

Impact of the Family

The theme of family, or *familismo*, appeared across all three researcher's artwork. For Solis, in Figure 1.A, the theme of family permeated throughout the piece. This is evident in the size of how Solis' parents were drawn, which were relatively larger in relation to the entire piece. The impact of the family can also be seen in Barraza's, Figure 2.B, which revealed having no voice in the family and being unable to speak up due to gender. Barraza correlated her personal experience of not being able to express herself openly due to the cultural expectation that young woman should not contradict the opinions of their parents. Further evidence of family themes and inability to go against ones parents can be found in Figure 3.B facts for parents, expectations of immigrant parents and hidden piece of a family. Marrs et al., (2013) posit how this attachment

with the immediate and extended family has been described as being both a positive and a negative influence on the effects of acculturation and immigration. Parra, Cardona et al., (2004) identify the multitude of influences within and outside of the home, by looking at how they influence the success of the acculturative experience. It is evident for Sanchez in Figures 1.C- Figure 4.C that there are close ties influenced by the theme and impact of *familismo*. Sanchez's work was constructed to focus on how the structure became a symbol of generational differences, which **in** turn highlighted the impact of the family's influence. Dillion and De la Rosa (2013) stated *familismo* means having a strong attachment to the family unity with high levels of social support. In addition, Marrs, and Hysjulien (2013) define *familismo* as a multi-layered experience in which family support is heavily regarded, which clearly resonated with all three researchers.

Tension and Struggle

Themes of "Tension and Struggle" were found to be true within all researchers' artwork. Several of Solis' pieces contained the theme of tension and struggle as it related to her acculturation experience. This was evident in figure 2A, where Solis explored her struggle of taking on the role as a translator for the family. Solis' parents struggle to acculturate and learn English resulted in their over-dependence on the children causing additional tension and struggle within the family. Cervantes, Padilla, Napper, & Goldback (2013) concur that acculturative stress is a process in which immigrants experience a variety of complex stressors that demand and highlight social factors, such as language, culture, and interpersonal relationships. As we began to understand the impact of tension and struggle, it was uncovered for researcher Barraza that, in Figure 2.B and 4.B, a disclosure of intense emotional feelings such as anger and anxiety arose from her acculturation experience. Figure 1.B and Figure 3.B. explore the duality of

tension and struggle through the experience of internal and external conflict. Figure 1.B, revealed a struggle of what to take and push aside, which connected to the internal struggle of personal individuation and acculturation. Figure 4.B uncovered the duality of tension and struggle in relation to a mother's expectation vs. daughter's expectations. A manifestation of tension and struggle through duality also appeared in Sanchez's work. Figure 2.C, identifies the tension and struggle experienced between societal and generational expectations. Sanchez also explored emotional tension through tangible physical conflict in Figure 1.C-Figure 4.C, where the physical evidence of the tension and struggle experienced is explored through the juxtaposition of materials. It was evident through each researchers artwork that the theme of Tension and Struggle was a product of the immigration and acculturation experience.

Choice of Materials

Choice of Materials provided a representation of containment for our immigration and acculturation stories. In Figure 4.A, Solis used heavy patterns and lines that could be found in the background. The art was used to represent a safe and containing space allowing her to depict something as vulnerable as getting hit during childhood. In Figure 1.A, Solis chose materials that provided enough structure to contain her vulnerability. Rather than using personal photographs she chose to use various collage images. Wood (2010) concurs that collage facilitates the client's ability to express their acculturation experience. For Solis, the collage images also reflected her experience of acculturating. Barraza used the content of the materials to address and encapsulate all four themes investigated by her acculturation experience. Figure 1.B-Figure 4.B, involved some kind of tactile material, while collage material appeared in all four-art responses, although not intentional. It is important to state that the art response process required deep and emotional involvement on behalf of Barraza and selection of the materials in itself was a triggering

experience. In Figure 1.C-Figure 4.C, Sanchez comments, “my choice in materials directly related and reflected this implication of having to make due with what resources were provided or brought in, and making them work.” Visible in all of Sanchez artwork was the combination of materials, the understanding of flexibility, and the development of balance, which was reflective of her immigration and acculturation experience. The choice of materials tied the four themes together and provided containment and grounding for Sanchez. Each researcher’s exploration of materials coincided with what was stated in the art therapy literature. Ojeda, Fuster, Moreno and Solis (2014) concur by stating that through the use of art materials, women are able to create a safe space; a space which provides containment of experiences, a sense of control, and freedom.

CONCLUSION

The next section encompasses each researcher's conclusions. The different styles evident in each researcher's writing reflect the different connections with their clinical work and their lived experiences. The section begins with Solis's reflections, followed by Barraza's and ending with Sanchez's; mirroring the different generational perspective that is evident in the research.

I believe being a first generation immigrant (being born in Mexico and then immigrating to America) acculturation had a major impact on my cultural identity. Similar to what was in the general and art therapy literature, I experienced navigating through both languages, Spanish and English while at times becoming a translator. Also as I acculturated more, the dominance of language switched, dominating English and ultimately losing a lot of my Spanish. The more acculturated I became I then began to question the submissive female roles that were placed on me by my culture and was different than the American. Furthermore, I realize my childhood discipline was also a result of stressors my parents had that was brought on by the difficulties of acculturating. Ultimately all these experiences have shaped the Hispanic/Latina woman I am today.

My artwork was a direct response to my personal acculturation story as a second-generation Latina as well as what the Hispanic/Latina client's elicited during the clinical work. Connections to the literature were uncovered in some of the pieces whereas others were not identified explicitly. Barraza discovered that the literature did not indicate how the acculturation experience directly affects self-esteem, which was a prevalent theme throughout her artwork. The themes of Familismo and depression, which were also predominant in her artwork, were in fact discussed in the general literature. The art therapy literature, although limited managed to

support how the choice of materials enhanced the investigation process for Barraza in her acculturating experience.

This experience has allowed me to reflect on the story of immigration and acculturation that I am a part of as a third generation. Having come from a place in which I assumed my story was invalid and had no validity I saw similar struggles in the discussions that I was having with clients also facing similar immigration and acculturation issues. Finding a space in which I belonged or had some meaning to me was the most difficult process of this experience. It was through the art making process that I was able to find a space in which I could remain grounded as I brought in weekly triggers and shared with the group. A sense of compassion and familiarity was experienced with the other researchers despite their experiencing being different. There were commonalities that I experienced I believe are important to be noted. Despite our generational differences it would be important and I would recommend that those who believe they have no story to look further and ask themselves again what that story of immigration and acculturation is for them.

This research contributes to the art therapy literature by providing an understanding of how the art facilitates the conversations and understanding of Hispanic/Latino/Latina's immigration and acculturation experience. The diversity of our experience as first, second and third generation allowed us to see the acculturation process through different lenses and highlighted the level of our cultural competency. Collectively, we found there were generational differences, but also commonalities in our stories. The similarities included the impact of *familismo* in how we viewed and formed our own sense of identity within the dominant culture. Some of the differences we found were as generations became acculturated the impact of immigration and acculturation appeared to decline. As Clinical Art Therapist's we used the art to

connect with our client's acculturation experience and our own counter transference issues. This research provides an opportunity for future art therapists to continue investigating the impact of immigration and acculturation within the Hispanic/Latino/Latina community.

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